

# A New Day BY PETER H

The early morning hours, prior to dawn, provide a quality of energy that can be harmonizing to one's centers – the body, the emotions and the thoughts. Daily, rain or shine, the dawn offers us high-quality impressions. The process from full darkness to twilight, to dawn, to sunrise, and into full daylight takes nearly 2 hours every day. It is a gentle process, a slow process, a lawful process.

Each morning the sun reveals itself to us little by little. The energetic qualities that the sun and daylight provide ionize and magnetize the earth and air. Such energy affects us in important ways. First, it conveys peace and harmony, especially if you can observe the sunrise in silence, stillness and solitude, even if just for 15 minutes.

Second, the dawn conveys the energy of possibility. A new "Do" or octave as we say in the Work of Inner Christianity. The Psalmist puts it this way, after a difficult

night or prior day, the new day brings joy:

In the morning, Lord, you hear
my voice; in the morning I lay
my requests before you and wait
expectantly" Psalm 5:3
And Lamentations 3:22-23 inspire

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

with an unforgettable line:

### Beginning Again

The process of night and day also reminds us of the process of forgiveness and letting go. At night, we can let go of the day we have lived. We enter into the "little death" of sleep, and through that process, it is as if our mind and body is reset, washed clean from the accumulated energy of the prior day. Often, we can awake, free and clear, like a blank slate, that is, until we start thinking again and taking in impressions.

Nevertheless, each day we can place our feet on the ground and welcome the gift of life. We can say: This is the day the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it. We can say: Praise be to God for the gift of this life! Each morning, we begin as we are and also wish to become more fully what we can be. We can pray: Lord, Take me as I am and summon out what I can be.

### The Part We Play in Harmonizing

Every day, everywhere the sunrise occurs in the same way. Yet every one of our lives is different. We each arise into a particular body, with a particular story, with a particular journey and responsibilities. We each are called to participate in the process of harmonizing, our self and our relationships with others.

It's not just up to the sun. It takes wisdom and work on our part too. Maurice Nicoll reminds us that, "the essence of the Work is to meet with unpleasant things equally with pleasant things. That is, in the Work, one does not seek always to avoid unpleasant things ... life is to be met with [and through] non-identifying ... Nothing can change being so much as this practice – namely, to take the unpleasant things in life as an exercise." (Commentaries, p. 88)

This may be one of the most practical aspects of the Work learning how to transform any impression. That is our role in cultivating harmony. If we can meet the unpleasant moment, event, situation, relationship, experience in a different way rather than just habitual reactivity or defensiveness. If we can more consciously choose which emotion we will express or not. If we can Work at choosing which thought we will believe or express, versus which thoughts we will question or ignore. Such practices go a long way to playing our part in harmonizing our beingness with other beings.

And while we are at it, don't forget to have fun with the process. Notice how joyful and playful the birds and animals are each morning, rain or shine. Notice how the hours of dawn bring forth the most birdsong of the day. Consider the lilies. Remember the birds. Notice how everything is just happening.

We conclude with a poem and wish that the poet Lynn Ungar will encourage you on your journey deeper into harmony—with yourself, with others, with the darkness, with the light, with reality, with God. There is deep wisdom in her poem *November*. She writes:

You don't have to be beautiful.
You don't have to shine.
Blooming will happen when it happens.
If you can be still for a moment You might notice that
The roots that feed you
Are still reaching silently through the dark.



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### ARISING as EMBODIED LIFE

# **2022** Aim: Arising *As* Embodied Life An Invitation and Reflection for All

At the beginning of each year, an annual aim is presented to the Church community.

All are invited to join into:

- renewing your intention and will to God,
- ₱ participating in a year dedicated to "Arising as Embodied Life," and
- ₩ moving ever deeper together as a community of intention, practice and devotion. *All glory to God!*

As a part of the annual aim, a special theme is presented each month to support a focused study of the aim.

This month, we reflect and look deeper at "Harmony in Being," while last month's theme was "Being Here."

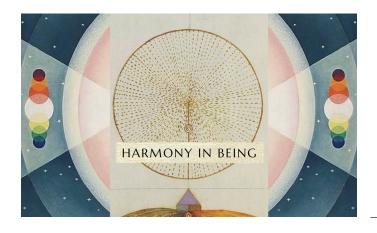
Some of the ongoing ways to participate in the annual aim are:

- o Engage with the The Journey School's weekly curriculum and Thursday evening class
- o Create a daily practice, which may include Centering Prayer, Scripture, and conscious movement (tai chi, yoga, or walking)
- o Study and apply the ideas of the Work of Inner Christianity
- o Attend a Eucharistic worship service
- o Attend church offerings, groups and classes
- o Meet with the minister, abbess, or minister's designate for spiritual companioning
- o Join a Seva group or serve in our youth education program
- o Attend Centering Prayer retreats
- o Tithe

Please prayerfully consider any or all of these offerings, which are available throughout the year.

More information about The Journey School is online at consciousharmony.org.

To learn more about the 2022 annual aim "Arising as Embodied Life"



Now and always may Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life or death. Philippians 1:20

# Annual Aim: Arising as Embodied Life

HARMONIOUS BEING

BY MARNIE HALUSKA

The first step
of conscious evolution
is balancing energies.
The method begins with
separating the energies of
thought, feeling, sensation
and then harmoniously
blending them. ...
Whenever we perform
an activity well,
all three centers participate
and contribute.

We have the experience of doing something with a single mind and whole heart, working together in a fluid, adaptive body. The lawful result is both a sense of satisfaction and of joy. An apt analogy of a balance between the various centers is the harmonious interchanges between members of an orchestra, in which each musician, playing their own instrument, uniquely contributes to the whole ensemble performance.

G I. Gurdjieff, cited in "Harmonious and Balanced Development," Gurdjiefffourthway.org The system of the centers is complex but answers perfectly to all needs. It allows us to perceive all the psycho-physical elements of the universe, to react to the impressions so received, to reach concepts, and to proceed to complex operations.

Boris Mouravieff, Gnosis 1

As a newer student of the Work of Inner Christianity, I keenly feel the wisdom of the exercise Mr. Gurdjieff references in the previous quotation - separating out the information coming from my body, heart and mind. Prior to being drawn by the Work, I certainly had the sense that "I" was composed of various faculties, but had very little conscious experience of how frequently my centers are at crosspurposes with one another. I could feel this tension even in the writing of this piece – the head wanting to make a particular argument, the heart desiring a certain quality

of vulnerability, and my senses registering gut-centered angst when the aims of my mind and heart met in conflict. However, I sense that the Work is building reliable access to each of my centers and the information they provide me in the moment, and I wish for the integration of what I find to create flow in my being, the interplay of heart, body and mind serving the greater purpose of arising.

When I consider the most expansive narrative arc within the Christian story as a whole, a general pattern seems to emerge – union, fragmentation and recaptured

wholeness. The three Bible references below offer a possible illustration of this trajectory. Could this triad represent the essence of the spiritual journey, the arc through which harmonious being is made possible? If so, each of these movements must have a critical role to play in the process; and the story would necessarily be stillborn without any one of them.

Let us make man humankind in our image, according to our likeness ... Genesis 1:26

[The Lord God] drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:24

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life ... Revelation 22:14

For many years, I have been puzzled by the first reference from Genesis uniting humanity's deepest nature to a reflection of the image and likeness of God. What does this mean? Over the years, interpretations have been many; but lately, I have been playing with the idea that this cryptic reference could be related to the concept of *threeness*,

a perfect harmony of Being.

God is three, I am three. As God can be conceived of as Trinity (Transcendent, Omnipresent and Immanent), I also am trinity (Mind, Heart and Body). Is it possible that my triune nature reflects that of the Divine? Could this, in some way, point to humankind's kinship with the image of God?

Transcendent – the Mind, that which is capable of "going beyond"

Omnipresent – the Body, matter, flesh, "heaven and earth are full of your glory"

Immanent – the Heart, presence, inner knowing

If I am to maintain the correspondence in threeness, as I affirm the perfect union within the triad of the Divine, surely recapitulation of that perfect harmony must also be a guiding principle for my own tri-unity.

Considering what often seems to be the pattern in which the hand of our salvation is extended to us, separation yielding to a uniting wholeness, my own story bears witness.

My earliest memory is one of communion: my sister and I quietly hand-sewing to pass the time on a plane, flying to a distant place. I consider this a gift, my awareness

being born in loving togetherness. As is the case for many young children, I knew no separateness from my family, my environment, myself; I could conceive of myself only as part of a whole. Capacity developed in time and I can recall distinct moments of awakening my mind in the discovery of the concept of eternity, driving me both to terror and wild, gleeful delight in the pleasure of an idea that could not be contained; my heart in my early experiences of the beauty of the liturgy that I encountered in the Lutheran church we attended as a family; and the senses in my young discovery of the melting euphoria offered by my body.

But I can also recall a growing awareness that not all was right in my world, there was something profoundly amiss, some nagging unease which I could not name. Hurts began to accumulate. I began to question the goodness of the world around me and my place in it. Am I seen? Do I belong? Is there anyone who truly knows me? I began to look inside and discovered that my early sense of belonging didn't seem to hold me any longer. My Innocence was no more.

I found myself in a labyrinth of fragmented Experience for many years in which mind, heart and body

each sought their own end, pieces of the previous whole seeking their own genuine, real path through the maze. Although I did not have the capacity to understand at the time, the cacophony of these years was essential to my development. These were the years of winnowing and discovering what was truly mine, not inherited from my parents or instilled in me by culture. In order to find my own way, I wandered far and wide, sampling what was on offer. I discovered many dead ends, seemingly fruitful leads that dried up in the end and other passages that led absolutely nowhere. It was often the cross-purposes, particularly of head and heart, that drove the decoherence of this time in my life. But beauty and awe supplied the silken thread that led me through the tangle of these years, serving as my North Star, orienting like signposts and tethering me to the real outside of the maze.

This hollowing-out prepared me for my role as a mother. With the unfathomable forming in the darkness of my womb, maybe I had labored long enough in the foundry of Experience. Our boy was born at dawn in the stillness of winter, and in those moments unlike any that had occurred prior or since, I

experienced a dropping-away of the self in which it was a truly unified body-heart-mind that witnessed those first precious hours with our son. Although the experience was transitory in nature, I tasted something extraordinary and now know in the deepest part of me that this type of frictionless presence is possible.

My relationship with our son set me on the path of spiritual development with an urgency I had not known prior. I very deeply felt the incredible responsibility of being mother to this newlyincarnated being, this God-bearer. Although the hunger for evolution had always been present in me, I lacked the community, tools and practices to strike a path towards that which I desired. It was during these years that I discovered both Centering Prayer and The Church of Conscious Harmony. I began learning about Centering Prayer shortly after the birth of our boy and, in 2012, my connection to CCH arose out of the church's relationship with Godly Play. I live in Illinois, but my husband's family lives in East Texas. On visits south to spend holidays with them, I have often been able to attend services at CCH. On a visit in December 2019, I was delighted to learn

that The Journey School was also offered to those who lived outside the Austin area. When I enrolled in January 2020, I was welcomed into a deeply-loving, life-giving spiritual community that I had been seeking for as long as I can remember. In 2021, I made a commitment as an Oblate of CCH and the associated Rule of Life, along with daily calls with my Work partner, making this past year a truly transformative one for me. My relationship with CCH has become the primary catalyst of my spiritual growth, but I also find deep nourishment in the Eucharist, in time alone in the woods near our home, long walks headed nowhere in particular, and studying science and mathematics as windows into the mind of God.

I wish to recapture the wholeness that has always been waiting for me to come find it and can feel how the dynamic flow of the Work of Inner Christianity has already initiated the knitting together of mind and heart into a simple cord of two. As we move through this year with our collective eye fixed on "Arising as Embodied Life," I wish that a harmonious triad be struck through me as I consent to the work of the Spirit in fusing body, heart and mind.

# Elder Wisdom: Honoring Our Fathers and Mothers

### Balancing Centers for Growing Consciousness by Helen Von Miller

A popular song goes:

"All of these lines across my face, Tell you the story of who I am, So many stories of where I've been, And how I got to where I am. But these stories don't mean anything When you've got no one to tell them to."

Because I am an animal loving, tree hugging, earth kissing, nature Lover, the term "new age hippie" seemed to fit when I was seeking Truth and finding metaphysics in the 1970s. Life was much different than it is today. There were no computers, nor weekly emails filled with transformative information.

Upon my marriage in 1958, the seed was planted. My soul mate, and husband of 58 years, was a "preacher's kid" who was devoted because his father served large Episcopal Churches in several states and his mother was the organist. Our plan took us to Ojai California for his ordination. Since organized religion was just that, organized, we felt the need to grow, learn, explore consciousness, and be awake on our spiritual path.

Daily practices formed. We found reading Ram Dass, the Fillmores, Emmet Fox, H. Emilie Cady, Eric Butterworth, and many

more essential – just as you have found Bernadette Roberts, Ilia Delio Thomas Merton, Thomas Keating, Nicoll's *Commentaries* and more. Early on our spiritual path, the day began with meditation. Centering Prayer is a form of meditation; the difference is you focus on your sacred word instead of breath. Affirmations (re-programming the subconscious) were used as our transformational strategy.

Waking each morning with meditations and affirmations led to a realization that being and feeling in your body isn't enough without connecting. But connecting with what? Having found Gurdjieff would have been very helpful. We had no idea that daily living in ordinary life, dealing with events and personalities, and how we communicate with others was practicing the Work of Inner Christianity. By the late seventies, we focused on learning how to rise and be in our body.

Looking back, our interpretation was much different than it is taught today, but the results are the same. If you are embodied, you are in your centers.

In the Work, we have learned that we have three centers. Self-

observation shows us how to listen as we live our lives. To be a Balanced man, we recognize which center we are in as we feel emotions and act or speak from that center. With practice, I know if it's the Intellectual, Emotional, or Moving/Instinctive Center that I am feeling. I listen. Through uncritical self-observation of all three centers, non-identification and Self-remembering, this one moves toward feeling balanced.

My intention with this Elder Wisdom sharing is to simplify and express my experiences with states of consciousness that come from these centers. But first, let's go back. I think the reason our lower centers don't bring us enough is that they cause constant distortions in perceiving people and life situations. One of my many daily affirmations is that my seven centers of consciousness can be used for my spiritual growth. Not to be used for self-criticism or inadequacy. Thus, once again, I remember, "be here now" in this moment.

"You are an entity, passing through a life in which the entire drama is an offering for awakening." Ram Dass

Here is my perception of my

seven centers, learned well before the present time. Your perception may be different.

First, my Security Center. This center focuses on survival, food, shelter, and making enough for security.

Second, my Sensation Center. Finding pleasurable sensations, such as music and food, is the focus. However, some addictive behavior can come from this center, such as overeating.

Third, my Power Center. Here, I observe change. As we evolve, we no longer have any desire to control, dominate, or give advice. Just "being" and observing, giving no opinion. Some can use this power center to boost ego, to feel superior and smart, so be conscious of developing unwanted attributes.

Fourth, the Love Center. Learning to love unconditionally, even myself, can be difficult. Have compassion for yourself and for all. A few years ago, our community reading was a book called *Letting Go* by David Hawkins. This book is worth reading again. It did wonders for me. When this one thinks of our community, our group consciousness, those Divine leaders who have come before us, I'm overcome and overwhelmed with gratitude, all from my love center.

Fifth, the Cornucopia Center is a struggle. You experience the friendliness of the world. You are creating as you reprogram your addictions. The perfection lies in giving you the experience as continuous enjoyment of the here and now. Take your "buffers" down; behold the world you are creating. As you become more loving and accepting, the world becomes a "horn of plenty," at least for this one. There's more happiness than you can imagine; but to appreciate it, we have to stop criticizing and finding fault.

Sixth, the Conscious-Awareness Center is where I identify. It's my favorite. Visualize standing a few feet away from yourself. You're looking at you ... What do you see? Who are you? Where are you going? What is your purpose? My Conscious-Awareness watches my mind-body perform on the lower five centers. This is my main center, where I non-judgmentally witness the drama of mind and body. I've learned to impartially observe my social roles and life games free from fear and vulnerability. I often laugh observing this funny old lady. "Who is she?" "She just said that?" "Now that was not ..."

And Seventh, the Cosmic Consciousness Center. When you learn to live in your sixth center (uncritically observing, non-identifing, and Self remembering), you are ready to transcend self-awareness and become pure awareness. Be embodiment. You are one with everything—love, peace, energy, beauty, wisdom, clarity, effectiveness,

and Oneness. Let's remember: "I owe you everything, you owe me nothing" and "Internal consider never, external consider always."

I became confident and a believer of the seven centers in the seventies when first introduced to metaphysics through a Unity Church in Houston. Years later, when meeting Tim Cook at Unity Church in Austin, I felt my spiritual journey evolving and going in a new direction. In 1984, Tim and Barbara Cook blessed my journey with a cornucopia of love, knowledge, and learning opportunities I could only have dreamed of. After all these years of daily practice, I don't even have to think. I open my eyes each morning and know "God is in charge of my Life." Then, comes the Welcoming Prayer and my "sit" or not, but I'm covered either way.

"The Work" really is just for you. You alone! You are the only one that can transform you.

I can also promise: Your thoughts can change your life! And if you know me, I always try and sell my beliefs on Affirmations.

As for Group Consciousness, well, that's it! Our journeys may be unique, but this group consciousness ... it can heal, it can fill you with tears of "unloading," it can even move mountains.

May God bless our evolving community as we manifest our Aim "Arising as Embodied Life" this year. Amen.

My Father is still working, and I also am working. John 5:17

# LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

BALANCING THREE CENTERS BY NATHAN JONES

Work Idea: There are three centers in each of us: Instinctive-Moving. Intellectual and Emotional Center. The Work speaks to the necessity of balancing these three centers. It appears that we have let our minds (Intellectual Center) run amok. Perhaps, we humans are predisposed to gravitate toward the Intellectual Center with our rather large heads. Or more likely our place in time, in the common era, enables people to spend entire days thinking and over thinking. Lost in the mind.... By using this one center as the primary tool to address all conceived problems, we exist out of balance. It is necessary that we work toward more harmony and equilibrium between the three centers. Let us explore what it means to lean into the Instinctive-Moving and Emotional Centers. What does it mean to move from one Center to the other?

Work Source: "The life of modern man – seen as though from outer space or from another dimension of time – appears as a huge being in whom the intellectual function has taken over the governance of life and has failed to bring order and

simplicity into life. On the contrary, by thrusting its solutions on the instinctual, physical, and feeling functions of the human organism, it has brought more complications and unhappiness into the life of man. The solution of specific external problems has been offset by the eruption of unprecedented confusion and anxiety in the inner life. We are incomplete because we do not have a balance of functions; we have only the isolated intellect as master." Jacob Needleman, *The Heart of Philosophy*, p. 200.

Application: Investigate the Instinctive-Moving Center. What changes in the Intellectual and Emotional Center after the Instinctive-Moving Center is tired, worked out and spent? There is something definite and experiential here. All three centers will move through a transition. If you can't observe it in real time, observe it in retrospect.

Further Resource: When the old master Hiakajo was asked, "what is Zen?" He said, "When hungry, eat, when tired, sleep." And they said, "Well isn't that what everybody

# Our Monthly Practice: Baking Bread

In service to our annual theme of "Arising as Embodied Life," last month, our practice was holding a rock. We continue with the practice of using our hands to connect with physicality this month, specifically with dough. Whether you have never made bread or if you're a pro, the invitation this month is to make an intention before you touch and as you knead the dough. Feel into the dough. Sense its life and possibilities. Ponder the mystery of the miracle of bread and how it has sustained humankind. Jesus referred to himself as the bread of life. Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, literally means "house of bread" in Hebrew. Bread is **the** Christian element, embodied as it is in the Eucharist. Be a part of the process of the life of bread by baking it, from start to finish. Observe your responses to the bread in each of its life-stages. Feel into all the aspects of bread – its sources, its enzymes, its coloration, its fermentation, its taste, its possibilities.

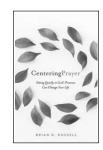
does? Aren't you just like ordinary people?" "Oh no," he said, "They don't do anything of the kind. When they're hungry, they don't just eat, they think all sorts of things. When they're tired, they don't just sleep, but dream all sorts of dreams."

### Воок Look



Judy Cannato's lovely and illuminating book title says it all: Radical Amazement: Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and Other Wonders of the Universe. If you are looking for a one-stop, accessible book that connects the new cosmology with contemplative practice, this is it.

Similarly, we celebrate the fresh voice of Brian D. Russell, who offers lovely new insights on the ancient practice of meditation. Centering Prayer as a formal method of meditation is about fifty years old, and few new books are being published.



The classic books on the method of Centering Prayer belong to Thomas Keating and Basil Pennington, and a

long list of second-generation teachers such as Cynthia Bourgeault and David Frenette. Though a basic introduction, Russell's new voice brings welcome clarifications and theological integration with the spiritual-but-not-religious crowd. It's one of the best comprehensive overviews of the method of Centering Prayer and related themes connected to a daily practice, such as the healing of the false-self system and the fruits of the prayer.

## COMMUNITY READING

Man in the Cosmos: G.I. Gurdjieff and Modern Science by Christian Wertenbaker

# SUNDAY SERMON THEMES ME, WE, MATTER

February 6	An Opportunity to be Me
February 13	A Community of We
February 20	The Heart of Matter
February 27	The Wisdom of Matter

### FEBRUARY CALENDAR

For more details, visit https://consciousharmony.org/ or call 512-347-9673

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

Online Centering Prayer Retreat Feb 12 9am-3pm Register online

Online Intro to Centering Prayer Course Feb 12 10am-noon, optional noon-3pm + 4 consecutive classes Tuesdays 7-8:15pm, begins Feb 15

In-Person Centering Prayer Retreat Feb 23 9am-4pm Register online

Meditations on the Tarot:

A Journey into Christian Hermeticisim Reading Group Co-facilitated by Mimi Conroy & Peter Haas Thurs, Feb 17-Apr 14, 12:05-1pm Zoom only Register online

### **MONTHLY**

Caritas Donations
1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables to CCH or
donate to caritasofaustin.org

### WEEKLY

Sundays

\*Centering Prayer & Lectio Divina 8-9am \*Intercessory Prayer 9am †Worship Service 10-11:30am †Youth Program (preK-12) 10-11:30am

Wednesdays

†Contemplative Worship Service 6-7pm

Thursdavs

\*The Journey School Class 7-8:30pm

Saturdays

\*Scriptorium noon \*Compline 9-9:15pm

**DAILY** 

†Centering Prayer Service 7-7:35am

\*Please join these services, groups, and classes via online video conferencing. Contact the website for accessible links and more information. †Open for in-person at CCH

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## Ordinary Time



Agnes Pelton, Room Decoration in Purple and Gray, 1917

O God, you have probed me.
You know me.
You know when I sit and stand.
You understand my thoughts from afar.
With all my ways, you are familiar.
Even before a word is on my tongue, you know it all. ...
You formed my inmost being.
You knit me in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works.
My very self you know.
Psalm 139:1-4, 13-14

All you have to do is stop being who you think you are, and you couldn't be more delightful.

Because there's nothing more beautiful than the uniqueness that God has created.

You don't have to create the beauty. You've got the beauty. You don't have to create the freedom, you've got it.

You don't have to create the image of God in you, you have it. You don't have to win over God's love, you have more than you know what to do with.

You don't have to become more beautiful because nothing could be more beautiful than your own particular uniqueness. Thomas Keating, "Centering Prayer," Heartfulness: Transformation in Christ